



Located at Whiteman Park,
Perth, Western Australia

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Museum Musings

A
Newsletter
for Motor
Museum of
WA
Volunteers
& Friends



Curator John McLean says Farewell after Eleven Years of Dedicated Service to the Motor Museum

**Thank you John McLean from Chairman
Kelvin Ferris**

Eleven years ago our late manager of 10 years, John Withers, retired due to ill health and my search for a replacement began. I interviewed John, a former Motor Mechanic, Business Proprietor, Car Collection Manager and Classic Car Insurance Assessor.

I liked this bloke, his passion for preserving motoring history, his ability to get on with volunteers, his association with car clubs along with his knowledge of the motor industry were outstanding. I had found our man! It was a wise choice and look at what the Motor Museum under his management has achieved in the past 11 years...

Visitor numbers increased, volunteer numbers reached a record high and numerous special theme displays were introduced just to name a few of his achievements. The wonderful vehicle and memorabilia display at the Museum is testament to his dedication, hard toil and the ability borrow and display the very best of exhibits.

John's commitment was such that he put in many extra hours at the Museum and regularly attended car shows, took phone calls at any hour and was always available for evening meetings associated with the advancement of the vintage and classic car movement. At John's own expense he has twice travelled abroad with me to enhance his knowledge and education.

In retirement he is coming with me again in August on a whirlwind Motor Museum tour including Germany, Holland, Belgium, Italy and to the UK to attend the World Forum for Motor Museums.

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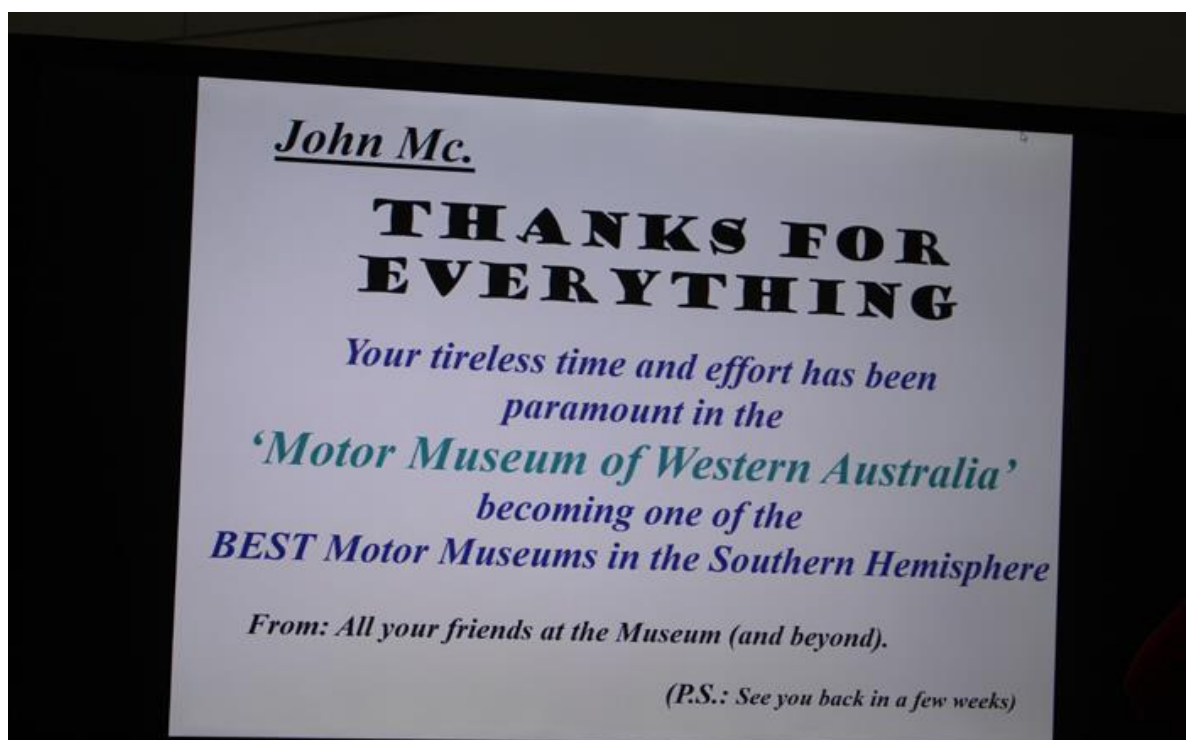
Following our trip abroad John will re-join the Motor Museum ranks as a volunteer assisting our new manager in a curatorial role, just work and play but no pay.

It has been an absolute pleasure to work with John over the past 11 years and on behalf of everyone associated with the Motor Museum I sincerely wish John and his wife Geraldine every happiness for the years ahead. It has been a fabulous relationship.

Kelvin Ferris



Pictured at a gathering of Motor Museum volunteers and friends at a function to farewell John on June 28 are new Motor Museum Manager Doug McCaffery, Chairman Kelvin Ferris and John McLean with John's wife Geraldine looking on.



New Website for the Motor Museum

A proposal for a new website for the Motor Museum has been approved and should be up and running during August.

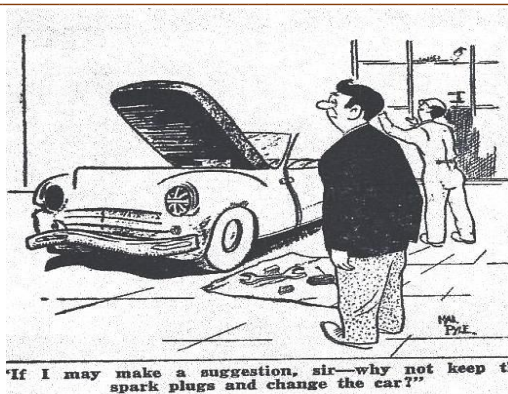
Motor Museum Manager Doug McCaffery said the the new website has been specifically designed for the Motor Museum based on the latest WordPress theme with a secondary focus on our Facebook page. The WordPress theme has been designed and developed for not-for-profit organisations and fits in well with the requirements of the Motor Museum with a simple menu navigation.

Unlike our current website which is now well outdated, the new website will have the added features of promoting popular exhibits, advertising upcoming events for people to investigate and will keep the Museum's activities fresh for those who regularly view the website.

Doug said that importantly, the new website will promote and encourage Trip Advisor reviews which is an excellent barometer of how we are viewed by vistors to the Museum.



Mentoring young people is a key objective of the Motor Museum. Pictured above is year 10 student Chelsea Dimond who spent a day with volunteers on work experience.



Joseph Whitworth

Henry Maudsley (1771 – 1831) invented the screw cutting lathe and through his training and experience his staff spawned many other inventions. One such person was Joseph Whitworth (1803-1887). Whitworth was mechanically minded from an early age and served as an apprentice in several machine tool companies including that of Maudsley in London. He opened his own workshop in Manchester in 1833 making lathes and other machine tools renowned for high class workmanship.

Whitworth developed great skill as a mechanic while working for Maudsley, developing various precision machine tools and also introducing a box casting scheme for the iron frames of machine tools that simultaneously increased their rigidity and reduced their weight. His greatest achievement lay in standardising the size of threads that were used in mechanical equipment in those days employed in the textile industry and in any structure requiring nuts and bolts. Until the introduction of standardised threads



each nut and bolt were individually made with no interchangeability. Whitworth proposed that every screw of a given diameter should have the same number of threads 8 to the inch with a set angle for the thread usually 55 degrees. Whitworth submitted his proposal to the Institute of Civil Engineers in 1841 and the scheme was adopted in 1860. Hence Whitworth threads and for example BSW British Standard Whitworth. He is also credited with introducing the Thou in 1844. A strong believer in the value of technical education,

Whitworth backed the new Mechanics' Institute in Manchester and helped found the Manchester School of Design. In 1868, he founded the Whitworth Scholarship for the advancement of mechanical engineering.

He donated a sum of £128,000 to the British government in 1868 to bring "science and industry" closer together and to fund scholarships. He was an extremely skilled innovator, and this ensured he lived a comfortable life, leaving various financial trusts upon his death.



If you couldn't find the emu in the picture published in the previous edition on Museum Musings look in the centre square.

History of the Automotive Airbag

An accident during a Sunday afternoon trip to the Pennsylvania countryside in the USA inspired retired industrial engineering technician, John W. Hetrick, to design one of the most important advances in automobile safety.

In the spring of 1952, Hetrick, his wife, and seven-year-old daughter were out for a Sunday drive in his 1948 Chrysler Windsor. About three miles outside Newport, they were watching for deer bounding across the road. Suddenly, there was a large rock in their path, just over the crest of a hill. He hit the brakes and veered the car to the right. The car went into a ditch but avoided hitting both a tree and a wooden fence. Hetrick said "As I applied the brakes, both my wife and I threw our hands up to keep our daughter from hitting the dashboard. During the ride home, I couldn't stop thinking about the accident. I asked myself: 'why couldn't some object come out to stop you from striking the inside of the car?'"

When he returned home, Hetrick started sketching designs for his 'safety cushion' and on August 5, 1952, filed for a patent. However, German inventor Walter Linderer also working on the idea received a patent in 1953 for an "inflatable cushion" to protect drivers in accidents.

Their early airbag designs inspired the automotive industry to work on this safety feature. Ford and General Motors experimented with inflatable restraints in the 1950's. However there were challenges associated with safety: it must be able to quickly and accurately sense a collision and inflate in 40 milliseconds or less. Also airbags could cause secondary injuries when passengers came in contact with them (a problem that still exists today).

In 1967 Mercedes-Benz started to develop airbags for its vehicles prompted by the rapid increase of accidents during the 1960s, and a new federal law that mandated 'automatic occupant protection systems' for every car in the USA from 1969.

In the late 1960's, a mechanical engineer named Allen K. Breed invented a device regarded as the birth of the airbag industry. Breed invented a reliable, five dollar crash sensor. His crash sensing technology, the only one of its kind, is considered the world's first electromechanical automotive airbag system. In 1991 he came up with an enhancement for the airbag to vent air as it inflates to "reduce the risk of secondary injuries by reducing the inflated bag's rigidity." Fundamentally this is the technology now applied in the automotive industry today.



Pictured left is Museum volunteer Rob DeBurg admiring a mining dump truck in the Pilbara mining town of Newman during a recent caravanning trip with his wife Lorraine

A man and his wife were sitting in the living room discussing a living will. "Just so you know, I never want to live in a vegetative state dependant on a machine and nutrients from a bottle. If that ever happens just pull the plug" the man says. His wife got up, unplugged the television and threw out all his beer.



Volunteers at Work

A recent inspection of the motor cycles on display at the Museum found that many fuel tanks had a significant amount of internal rust due to perished fuel and condensation.

Volunteer Mike Rooney (a keen motor cycle enthusiast) has taken on the responsibility of cleaning the tanks and applying a special coating to protect them against future rust.

Mike is pictured hard at work refurbishing the tanks.



With the rising popularity of electric power assisted bicycles, the above photograph, taken in France in 1898 of an electric tandem, is a timely reminder that much of today's modern technology has its roots well and truly in the past. If the picture proves one thing, it is that batteries have undergone a vast improvement over the past hundred years or so while the bicycle is fundamentally unchanged.



Saturday August 18 will see the Motor Museum host an auction of the Mitch Vickers Holden Premier collection. The Museum has been fortunate to display the collection over the past 12 months.

In addition to the Premier collection, a variety of other vehicles and motoring memorabilia will go under the hammer on the day. Keen interest in the auction is expected from throughout Australia and possibly overseas.

Manager Doug McCaffery said that the logistics of hosting the auction are quite challenging and the days leading up to the auction are expected to be a busy time for volunteers. Doug is asking for as many volunteers as possible to make themselves available on the day of the auction and the few days prior to the event.



On Friday 27 July Gerri Deegan, Whiteman Park's Environmental and Operations Coordinator, gave volunteers an overview of fire extinguishers and how to use them. Gerri also gave a short session on emergency procedures to adopt in the event of a medical emergency.

Manager Doug Mc Caffery said that the sessions will be held every six months as part of the Motor Museum's Emergency Management Protocols.

Our sincere thanks to Gerri and Whiteman Park for their input and continued support.

The Percy Markham Collection

Provided by - *Beata Dawson Ph.D. Candidate, Curtin University*

Percy Markham lived in Perth and was a passionate veteran and vintage car collector. He was one of Australia's foremost antique car collectors. To display his car collection to the public, Percy and his family opened an Antique Auto Museum in 1965, in Wembley, Western Australia. The Markham collection contained around 40 cars, an 1843 horse-drawn landau and a number of motorcycles dating from 1904. The vehicles were initially displayed by Percy in the Antique Auto Museum. The Museum's importance was demonstrated by being the only one in Australia mentioned in the publication "The World's Motor Museums" (Nicholson, 1970).

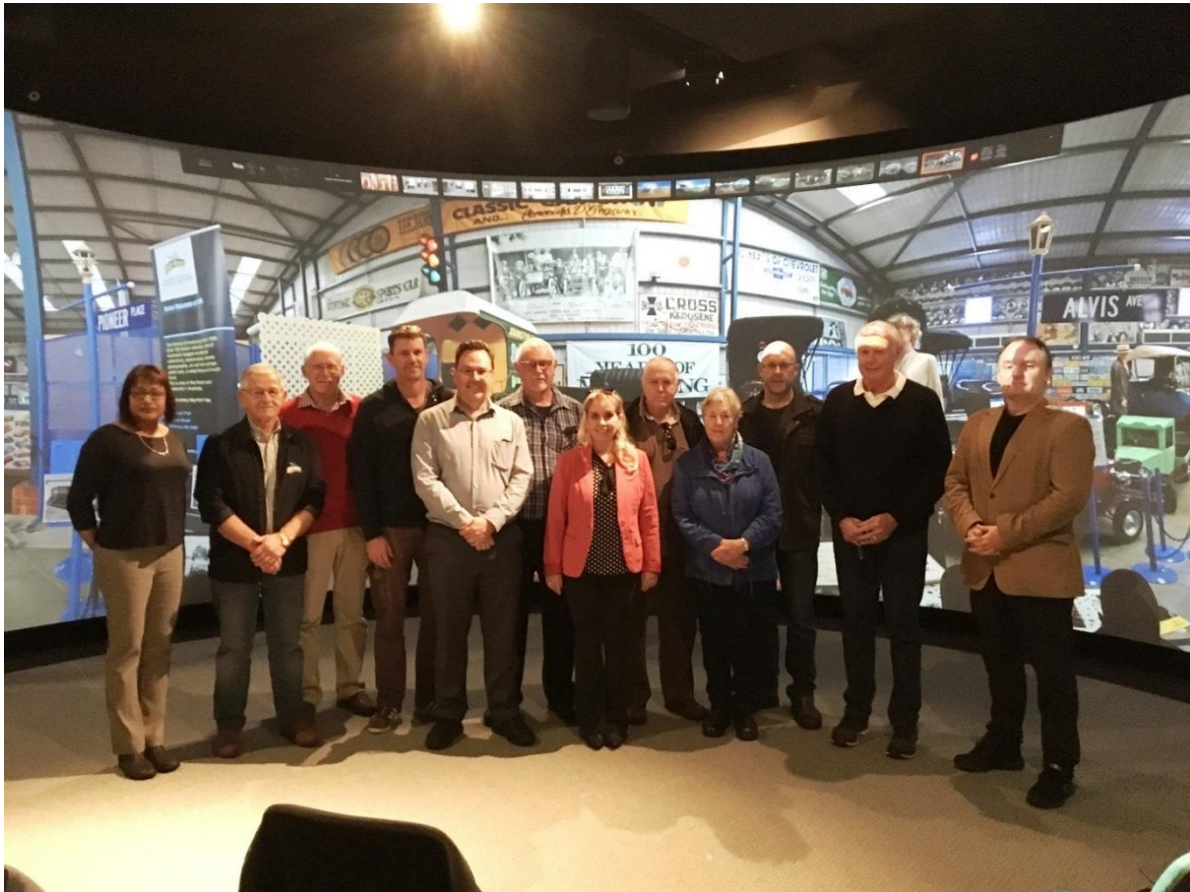
In 1967, Percy offered '22 beautifully restored' cars from his collection to the Western Australian (WA) Museum. The agreement between the Museum and Percy was made in 1969. Under the agreement the WA Museum was able to purchase the collection at a notional price (\$180,000), paying in instalments and without any interest. In addition, the family donated \$100,000 and gifted several motorcycles to the Museum. The Markham car collection was on display there from November 1971. It illustrated the development of the motor car and was the first comprehensive collection of veteran and vintage cars exhibited in a state museum in Australia.

However, in a controversial decision in the late 1980s, the WA Museum elected to auction ten vintage and luxury cars from the collection. These vehicles were reasoned to have no real association with Western Australian culture or history and were considered to be not native to Western Australia. The public, especially members of different motoring communities, found the Museum's decision questionable. The action generated a lot of negative publicity. Petitions were signed and the motoring community organised a protest car rally along St. Georges Terrace against the decision. However, the auction went ahead as planned and nine were sold. The only one of the ten auctioned cars which survived and remained in the State was the 1898 Star. This car had participated in the London-Brighton Rally in 1938 and is one of the oldest existing vehicles in Western Australia. It is currently displayed at the Motor Museum of Western Australia.

Beata Dawson designed and developed a virtual panorama tour to tell the story of the Markham car collection. The narrative of the story was based on Dr. Pauline Joseph's (Senior Lecturer, Curtin University) research article *Heritage of the Markham Car Collection: Estrangement from the West Australian Motoring Community*, which was published in the journal *Collections: A Journal for Museums and Archives Professionals*, in 2016. The panorama tour "*The story of the Markham car collection*" digitally showcases the world-class veteran and vintage cars lost to the motoring community and the people of Western Australia in 1990. It is published online making this collection visually accessible, thereby in a visual sense fulfilling Percy Markham's wish to leave a legacy of antique car history for Western Australians and commemorating Percy Markham, and his never-to-be-forgotten heritage.

On 13th of July, a virtual tour of the Markham story was showcased by Beata Dawson at Curtin University's 'Hub for Immersive Visualisation and eResearch'. Along with members of the Markham family and representatives from Curtin University, the Motor Museum was represented by Kelvin Ferris and Nick Rykers.

See pictures next page



Beata Dawson, (centre) pictured with Dr Pauline Joseph, Professor Eric Champion (Curtin University), members of the Markham Family, along with Kelvin Ferris and Nick Rykers who attended the virtual tour of the Markham Collection.



Above: Markham vehicles on loan from the WA Museum and on display at the Motor Museum are clockwise: 1898 Star, 1914 Detroit Electric, 1924 Vauxhall 13/98 Tourer and 1925 Rolls Royce.

Welcome to new volunteers:

Ruth Ireland

Elizabeth Hides

Ross and Karen Maddison

For Sale

Always available at the Motor Museum is a comprehensive range of Penrite lubrication products specially formulated to suit modern and older vehicles.

A range of motoring fashion clothing and motoring memorabilia.

Code 404 number plate identification for concessional license – Historic plates \$7.50 each, Historic stickers \$5.00 each.

Wanted

Volunteers' stories and recollections to share in Museum Musings.

Coming Events

August 18 – Motor Vehicle and Automotive Memorabilia Auction, Motor Museum of WA
(visit burnsandco.com.au for details)

August 26 - York Motor Show

September 1 – Koorda Car and Bike Show

September 9 -Classic Cars and Coffee - Hackett Drive, Crawley

October 14- Classic Cars and Coffee - Hackett Drive, Crawley

October 21 - VCC Spring Auto jumble

The RAC Learning Hub and Conference Room at the Motor Museum is available to clubs, social groups and the community for meetings, conferences, social gatherings and as a learning facility (daytime only). Bookings can be made by telephoning the Motor Museum on 9249 9457.

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You can contribute to the Museum Musings with your ideas for content by emailing the editor Len Douglas at ljenjoy@westnet.com.au or the Museum at motormuseum@optusnet.com.au

Website: www.motormuseumofwa.asn.au